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SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/17/2020
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PARM](#) [CH](#) [EUN](#)
SUBJECT: SUPPORTING THE EU ARMS EMBARGO ON CHINA

REF: USEU 133

Classified By: EUR A/S PHILIP H. GORDON. REASON: 1.4 (D)

11. (C) SUMMARY: This is an action request for all Embassies in EU countries to reiterate our position that the EU should retain its arms embargo on China. Spanish officials, including the Spanish Foreign Minister, signaled a possible review of the arms embargo under Spain's Presidency of the EU. Although USEU reports that there is no active discussion of this in Brussels (reftel), we believe it is important to reiterate that the U.S. remains firmly opposed to any lifting of the embargo. END SUMMARY.

BACKGROUND

12. (U) Spanish Ambassador to China Carlos Blasco told Chinese journalists on January 21 that "we hope to intensify talks on lifting the (arms) embargo." Subsequently, when asked about these comments at a January 26 press conference, Spanish Foreign Minister Moratinos stated that his government would be "reviewing the decision" on and "weighing the pros and cons" of lifting the arms embargo.

13. (C) The EU imposed the arms embargo on China, alongside a similar U.S. arms embargo, following the violent suppression of protestors at Tiananmen Square in 1989. The last major push to lift the EU arms embargo came in late 2004/early 12005. France and Germany were strong proponents of lifting the embargo at the time. In the end, a combination of our public and private opposition, NGO pressure, and the passage of a Chinese anti-secession law authorizing the use of force against Taiwan persuaded EU governments to maintain the embargo.

14. (C/REL EU MEMBER STATES) ACTION REQUEST: Posts are asked to approach host government at the appropriate level to reaffirm U.S. opposition to the lifting of the arms embargo, and solicit host government views on the issues, using the below talking points:

-- We are concerned by recent comments suggesting that the EU may consider lifting its arms embargo on China.

-- The United States position on an arms embargo has not changed since the Tiananmen crackdown of June 1989 or since the last time the EU considered lifting the ban in 2004: We continue to believe that lifting the embargo is not warranted, on either human rights or security grounds.

-- In terms of human rights, the Chinese Government's actions over the last few months have ignored international concern over specific human rights cases, including the harsh sentencing of Liu Xiaobo to 11 years in prison and the execution of British citizen Akmal Shaikh. Public comments at this time from senior European officials suggesting that the EU may seek to lift the arms embargo undercut these international concerns regarding Beijing's human rights practices.

-- We refer you to the Department of Defense's annual PLA Military Power Report, which highlights the increased capabilities of Chinese military forces. Lifting the arms embargo would have serious implications for the security and stability of the Pacific region.

-- (If the EU's Code of Conduct is brought up) We believe that the Code of Conduct and 'toolbox' of export controls cannot replace the embargo.

-- We should continue to discuss the requirements of security and stability in East Asia in the context of the U.S.-EU strategic dialogue on Asia.

15. (U) Please slug all responses for EUR/ERA, EAP/CM, PM/RSAT and ISN/RA. Department thanks Posts for their assistance.
CLINTON